

SAN BERNARDINO COUNTY CHILDREN'S NETWORK

Policy Council Minutes October 22, 2003

Members/Representatives Present:

- Mandi Batalo, County Library
- Jeronimo Breen, Department of Behavioral Health
- Mary Lynn Clark, Inland Regional Center
- Bruce Davis, 3rd District Board of Supervisors Representative
- Gerald Farber, Public Defender
- Laurie Ferguson, Public Defender
- Don Larkin, First 5 San Bernardino
- Joyce Lewis, Department of Behavioral Health
- Rudy Lopez, Director of Department of Behavioral Health
- Susan Melanson, Children's Network
- Kent Paxton, Children's Network Officer
- Ed Rowe, Children's Network
- Claudia Spencer, Department of Public Health
- Judge Rex Victor, Juvenile Court
- Ray Wingerd, Interim Chief Probation Department
- John Kochis, Chief Deputy District Attorney
- Dr. Malfozzi – New Day Center Group Home
- Tammy Williams, Children's Network

The meeting of the Children's Network Policy Council was called to order at 12:10 p.m. and convened by Judge Rex Victor in the Citrus Room, fifth floor, County Government Center.

1.0 Welcome and Introductions

Judge Rex Victor welcomed those present and self-introductions were made. Dr. Malfozzi from the New Day Center Group Home was welcomed as a special guest to hear recommendations about his proposed New Day Center Group Home.

2.0 Approval of Agenda

Kent Paxton requested item 5.1 Children's Fund Report be removed this month as Rebecca Stafford is out of the office and remove 5.3 Parenting Programming Update for this month, as it will be reviewed in December. It was requested to add to the agenda Stephen Martinez to speak on Group Home Legislation.

There was further discussion about when to reschedule the last meeting of the year, as November 26th is the day before Thanksgiving. There was further discussion about some of the topics to be covered at the last month: presentation of the Children's Network 2003 Annual Report; and the Multidisciplinary Team systems analysis of the death of Jerry D.

Action: After further discussion it was decided to reschedule the last Children's Network Policy Council meeting for 2003 to: Wednesday, December 3, 2003 at noon, at the Citrus Room – 5th Floor of the County Government Center.

3.0 Approval of September Minutes

The September 25, 2003 minutes were approved as submitted.

4.0 Discussion/Action Items

4.1 New Day Center Group Home: Discussion/Action Requested to forward a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to Approve or deny a letter of support for the New Day Center Group Home

Kent Paxton referred everyone to his/her agenda packets with the back-up documentation for this item. New Day Center Group Home is a proposed 6 bed group home planned for Chino to serve boys ages 6 to 12 with moderate to severe behavior problems. They plan to accept fire starters as well as the severely disturbed. This particular item was on the agenda last month, but no motion was made due to the need of some further research. **Action: There being no further discussion, a motion was made to forward the recommendation to the Board of Supervisors for Letter of Support.**

5.0 Information Items

5.1 (amended) Stephen Martinez and Group Home Legislation

Steven Martinez from HSS (Human Services System) Legislation and Research Division reported: Kent Paxton wants to move forward with some legislation that applies to group homes. This legislation could apply better quality controls of over group homes within the boundaries of San Bernardino County. Past legislative restrictions of group homes located 300 to 1,000 feet have failed. There was further discussion about the impact group homes have on schools, law enforcement, the fire departments, etc.

A suggestion made was to have all the group homes to get letters of support at the time of their annual license renewal if there were concerns, and if there were they would not get a letter of support. It was reported that CCL (Community Care Licensing) usually does not pull licenses at the time of renewal, unless there has been severe abuse or neglect substantiated. A recommendation was made to develop a very general platform that could be presented to the state, once the Board of Supervisors approve. It was reported that there is some legislation dealing with distance between group homes and has an 800 complaint number attached, which was authored by Joe Baca. The specific legislation in mind would be geared to children in group homes of 6 beds and less. There was some discussion about complaints on group homes reported to CCL, and that the County is not always aware of them, since CCL is under no obligation to report back to the county. Placement staff, law enforcement, and sometimes school staff receives complaints on group homes. A suggestion made was to have some corrective action written into the proposed legislation that would assist group homes before closing them down. Kent Paxton reported that there is some language already written up that could be used. Stephen shared the following document, "2004 State Platform Item – Group Homes". **Policy Council members were asked to review the document and get all remarks to Stephen Martinez prior to the next Policy Council meeting. A final draft will be written up and presented to the Policy Council on December 3rd.** There was further discussion if the same legislation could apply to small Family Homes, the answer was no. Rudy Lopez mentioned his concern about children from Los Angeles County being placed in group homes in San Bernardino County and that he did not have adequate staff to work with these children in the group homes. It appears that 51% of the group home beds in this county are filled with children of dependency cases from other counties. **Action: Group Home Legislation will be placed on the agenda for December, 2003.**

5.2 Child Welfare Services Redesign

Cathy Cimbalo referred to a folder that had the following handouts: CWS Redesign: The Future of California's Child Welfare Services Final Report, September 2003; CWS Redesign Highlights; Key Outcome Indicators; What's New About Redesign; and Results for Children and Families. Cathy Cimbalo presented a power point presentation to the group with further details.

Governor Davis asked for a review of the Child Welfare Services system, so a stakeholders committee was formed and has been working on it for the last 3 years. The goal is for all 58 counties throughout California to implement the “new” redesign system within the next 5 to 10 years.

- The new system will have more emphasis on prevention and early intervention.
- Six counties were involved in the early implementation; San Bernardino County was not one of them.
- The new system will be based on an outcomes based approach.
- There has been a Federal review of the Child Welfare System in 12 states and none of the states were able to successfully pass the review.
- The biggest change will be the community to be involved in the family centered strengths model.
- Cathy mentioned this county would be the third group of counties to roll out the new system.
- This county will be committed to keep the child in the community where he/she lives through wraparound services.
- The Casey Foundation through a grant with this county is providing technical assistance.
- There will be a quality review component as recommended by the Feds.
- The basis of the redesign is the legislation on AB 636.
- It has been determined that some of the issues on the cases is how the data input has not been consistent by staff.
- There will be a variety of reports and improvement plan created and eventually submitted to the Board of Supervisors.
- The three main components of the new Child Welfare Redesign will be; community collaboration, collection of data, and on-going improvement activities.
- The State will be putting on a website for the public the results of each county on how they are meeting compliance issues.
- A question was raised whether there will be a comparison of funding issues in each county?
- Each county will be setting their own improvement goals.
- The community collaboration will continue with the Children’s Network community collaboratives.

- The Children's Network CST (Children's Services Team) will be expanding the focus of the group to work as a Self-Assessment Team for the "new Child Welfare Services Redesign".
- The Policy Council will still be the link to the Board of Supervisors for the Child Welfare Self-Assessment Team.
- A number of representatives throughout the county and private sector have been added to the membership for the Child Welfare Self-Assessment Team.
- The chairpersons for the Child Welfare Self-Assessment Team will be a manager from the Department of Children's Services and Claudia Spencer from the Department of Public Health.
- The first task for the Child Welfare Self-Assessment Team will be to look at the data for analysis purposes from a variety of sources.
- Some of the data to be analyzed will be on the number of: abuse cases; reunification, time to adopt, stability of placements, and re-entry into the child welfare system.
- Long-term foster care and time for adoption will be analyzed and explained to the public the timeframes.
- Some of the data to be analyzed will be on the rate of reoccurrence of abuse, which initially looks bad for this county. Some of the problems for the high reoccurrence rate can be due to one incident reported more than one time.
- A Child Welfare Assessment Improvement Plan will be submitted to the Board of Supervisors in the Fall of 2004.

Questions and comments? Jeronimo Breen reported that the Redesign sounds similar to the Department of Behavioral Health Discovery Recovery model and most recently to the Strategic Planning process they just completed. Kent Paxton mentioned that the Child Welfare Self-Assessment Team minutes would continue to be placed in the Policy Council agenda packets. Claudia Spencer asked if the work would be affected by the re-call of Governor Davis? Cathy Cimbalo answered no, as it was already in place before the re-call election. Cathy mentioned that the stakeholders subcommittee was given the task to design the best model of child welfare redesign services with no concern for funding. No action was required on this item. Kent Paxton reported that the Policy Council would continue to get monthly updates on the progress of the Child Welfare Self-Assessment Team.

6.0 Other

Susan Melanson asked that the entire final input for additions and changes to the Children's Network Annual Report need to be submitted to her promptly.

7.0 Public Comment

Ray Wingerd adjourned the meeting on behalf of Judge Rex Victor at 1 p.m.

8.0 Next meeting will be: December 3, 2003

Respectfully Submitted,

**Tammy Williams, Children's Network
Policy Council Recording Secretary**

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